

4 Facing Felony Charge Following KKK Group's Justice Park Rally

Four people are facing felony charges after counterprotesting a weekend rally by members and supporters of the Loyal White Knights of Ku Klux Klan.

Monday, July 10th 2017, 11:36 AM EDT

Updated:

Wednesday, July 12th 2017, 4:45 PM EDT



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Police detaining a person during a rally at Justice Park in Charlottesville (FILE IMAGE)

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (WVIR) - Four people are facing felony charges after counterprotesting a weekend rally by members and supporters of the Loyal White Knights of Ku Klux Klan.

A total of 22 people were arrested in connection to the hate group's Saturday, July 8, rally at Justice Park in downtown Charlottesville.

Thirty-two-year-old Sarah E. Barner, 18-year-old Naomi Michelle Bendersky, and 20-year-old Diego Trujillo are each charged with a felony count of wearing a mask in public. Twenty-seven-year-old Jordan Lee Romeo is charged with assaulting a law enforcement officer.

Klan members had acquired a permit from the city to gather at the park, saying the event was in support Southern heritage and against City Council's decision

to remove a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

According to officials, about 50 supporters were met by a crowd of over a 1,000 people. Around 200 law enforcement officers from different jurisdictions were on hand for the mostly peaceful counterprotest that enveloped the park.

Police did use tear gas after the rally to disperse a crowd of people blocking the KKK group from leaving the area.

All four people charged with felonies appeared in Charlottesville General District Court Monday, July 10, and were appointed public defenders. They are all scheduled to be back in court on August 24.

Authorities have so far charged the following people with misdemeanors:

- Assault and Battery(1) - 28-year-old Jarell Sykes Jones
- Failing to Disperse in a Riot (1) - 19-year-old Rasha Langston
- Obstructing Free Passage (11) - 24-year-old Jo Zenobia Donahue, 38-year-old Veronica Haunami Fitzhugh, 52-year-old Thomas Freman, 28-year-old Nicolas Roy McCarthy, 37-year-old Jeanne Marie Peterson, Cameron S. Bills, Kendall J. Bills, John R. Neavear, Sara M. Tansey, Evan S. Viglietta, Whitney R. Whiting
- Obstructing Justice (4) - 26-year-old Katherine M. Niles, 25-year-old Tracy Gene Redd, 25-year-old Erika Jenna Riles, and Kandace N Baker

The twenty-second person arrested and charged is a minor.

Police and public safety agencies are adding up the costs to protect the community during Saturday's rally.

A Charlottesville spokesperson told NBC29 that it will take several days to total the city's tab due to the many different agencies and departments involved.

A spokesperson for Virginia State Police said troopers were able to shift around schedules to minimize overtime costs. State police expect its total expense for Saturday's rally to take about a week to tally up.

07/12/2017 Editor's Note: additional names and charges were provided by Virginia State Police.

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